(e) if so, the details thereof, including steps taken for its restoration to vehicular traffic?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIAPPA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The maintenance and repair of National Highways is a continuous process and is being done with in the available resources. The nature of work carried out includes routine maintenance, repair of the stretches damaged during rains and over and above periodical renewal works, to improve the riding surface. Improvement of riding quality in the form of Bituminous Macadam and Semi Dence Bituminous Concrete layers has been provided in the damaged stretches of NH-53 in a length of 57.50 kms during the last two years. This is in addition to the original works carried out on various stretches of this NH.

(c) There are 66 bridges on NH-53 at various locations, constructed as early as in 1970. The Border Roads Organization and Public Works Department Assam, who are responsible for developing and maintaining these bridges, have carried out repair work on these bridges, wherever and whenever necessary. No major repair/restoration and strengthening of bridges on this NH have been carried out during the last three years.

(d) and (e) Two bridges were damaged on NH-53 recently. One bridge has been replaced with a new bridge and the other one has been rehabilitated by the BRO.

Four-Laning of NH-5 in Orissa

3249. SHRI RUDRA NARAYAN PANY:
SHRI B.J. PANDA:

Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that construction of four-lane highway on the NH-5 in Orissa is moving at a snail's pace;

(b) whether Government are aware that the tardy pace of work is mainly on account of cancellation of contracts and legal battles etc. and

(c) if so, the action plan of Government to speed up construction of the highway project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIAPPA): (a) and (b) 362.4 km of NH-5 in the State of Orissa has been taken up for 4-laning as part of Golden Quadrilateral, of which 185.77 km has been completed and balance is under implementation except for Ganjam-Icchapuram section, where the contract was terminated due to non-performance of contractors. There have been delays due to problems associated with acquisition of land, poor management by contractors, law & order problems, litigation etc.

(c) In order to expedite the progress, the projects are being monitored at various levels. To ease the cash flow problem of the contractors, discretionary advances are given. There is regular interaction with the authorities of the State Government about law and order problems. Efforts are also made to re-award the Ganjam-Icchapuram section.

Charging of toll fees

3250. SHRIMATI MOHSINA KIDWAI: Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether NHAI charges toll fees for use of its highways, bridges, etc. at one-and-a-half times of one way charges if the return journey is performed within 24 hours;

(b) whether this cause hardship to genuine tourists/businessmen travelling by road who may perform return journey after some days; and

(c) whether Government propose to accommodate such genuine travelers under their scheme of allowing discount in case of both ways journey?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIAPPA): (a) Yes, Sir. This concession is available only for Highways/Bridges built under public funded projects.

However, the concession is not available in cases of user fee (toll) based on Private Investment Projects.

(b) There is no cause for hardship as user fee is levied for the maintenance and up-keep of the highway.

(c) Government have no such proposal under consideration.